

Reflection

*Take away from me the noise of your songs;
to the melody of your harps I will not listen.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
Amos 5: 23-24*

It's a funny thing that in this time of pandemic that we have been told by the Government that we are not to sing together in church. No noise of our songs, no melody of our harps...unless we are separated by the airwaves of the internet. In the past couple of weeks, I have had a couple of powerful experiences whilst doing "church without walls".

The first was the experience of singing together in our church car park with sisters and brothers from across the churches of Erdington, as we prepared to pray for our neighbourhood and to pray for racial justice, amongst other things. I had forgotten just what a great thing it is to be able to give voice, together, to our God! It lifted my spirit but at the same time reminded me what I am missing.

The second and very powerful experience was our Prayer Meeting for Racial Justice this week. Actually, it was pretty much all about people sharing and about discussion. There were 14 of us present on Zoom. We talked about what needs to change, more particularly what we need to change, in order for racial *justice to roll down like waters*.

We talked about the need for education for all ages. Black people who were there shared their own painful experiences and those of their family members, particularly about the many times when they or loved ones had been unjustly stopped by the police. Sometimes the things being said were hard to hear.

Some of the White people expressed their shame and regret about the racism of the past and how it endures now.

The important point was made (again) that it should not be left for Black people to find solutions: White people need to take responsibility.

We identified some things we felt it is important for us to have on our agenda as the Body of Christ, as we seek justice:-

1. to work with local schools in educating about Black history and racial justice.
2. to do more in our church to educate our young people in these matters.
3. to do more in our church to educate adults in issues of racial justice – including "unlearning".
4. to call to account our MP, councillors, West Midlands Mayor, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable about racial justice.
5. to find out more about what the police are doing in terms of training, recruitment and racial awareness.

We said even more than this. The above is just a beginning.

If you have further thoughts/comments/ questions about the above or related issues...I'd love to hear from you.

Maybe in this time when we have had the noise of our songs and the melody of our harps taken away from us, this is our time to understand and enact what God wants from us at this time: justice and righteousness.

Prayer

God of justice and joy.

We know racism is an abomination.

We know that it is a sin that sits in all of us and we see how it dries us up and divides us.

Strengthen us to roll with your waters of justice and your ever-flowing righteousness.

Help us to follow your heart and to seek justice.

Challenge us to make excuses no more.

We pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.